



MEMORIAL DAY 2006: Honoring Our Heroes

LAI to REST

WWII Airman's remains return home after 63 years

By 1st Lt. Mary Olsen
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

After 63 years of uncertainty, Helen Pennington was finally able to give her late husband a hero's farewell.

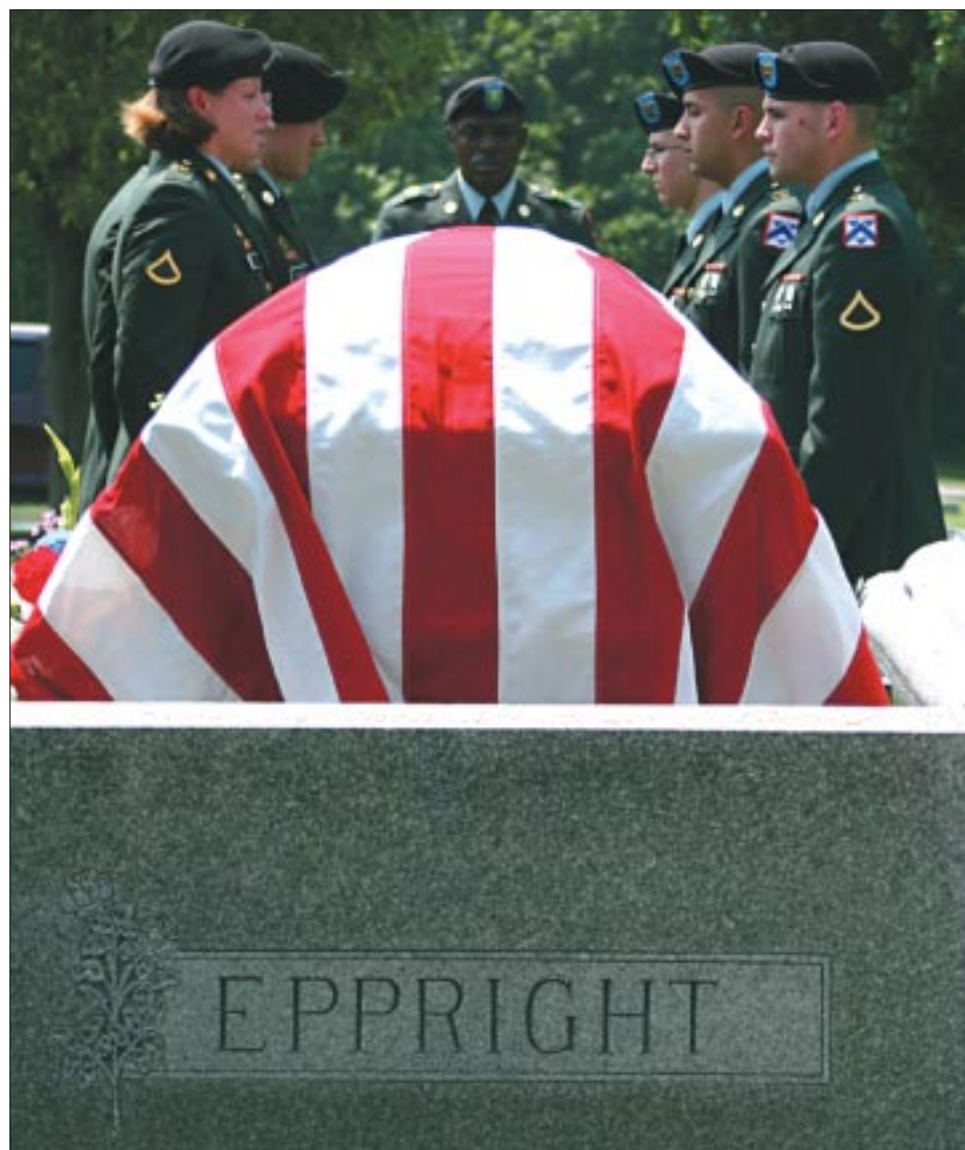
First Lt. David Eppright was laid to rest in Warrensburg's Sunset Hill cemetery Tuesday.

It's been more than six decades since Lieutenant Eppright's B-24 departed from Dobodura, Territory of New Guinea, for an armed reconnaissance mission. The plane, carrying a crew of nine, departed on Nov. 4, 1943. Just a few hours into their mission, the crew sighted a convoy of Japanese ships in the Bismarck Sea south of Kavieng. The B-24 continued to follow the convoy and sunk a Japanese light cruiser, but then never returned back to Dobudura. A later search attempt failed to locate the plane.

Ms. Pennington was pregnant with their son just before she learned of her husband's fate. When she found out she was pregnant, medical personnel asked her if she wanted them to notify her husband.

"I told them I wanted to be the first one to tell David," she said.

But Ms. Pennington never got the chance to tell her



Army Honor Guard members from Fort Leavenworth, Kan., prepare to fold the flag as they stand by 1st Lt. David Eppright's casket and grave Tuesday. Lieutenant Eppright, a WWII navigator, was finally laid to rest at Sunset Hill Cemetery in Warrensburg after his B-24 went missing in 1943. His remains were found in Papua New Guinea in 2000 and identified in April 2006.

husband that they were expecting a child.

The men aboard the B-24 were said to be missing in action and in January 1946, the United States War Department declared them all dead.

Ms. Pennington said she never thought she'd have closure, but in April, she was notified that her husband's remains were positively identified.

"It was a shock," she said. "I couldn't believe it."

In 2000, a hunter in Papua New Guinea stumbled upon airplane wreckage. He found bones and dog tags and kept them for two years before turning them into the U.S. embassy. Another two years of search, recovery and investigation of remains and items belonging to many of the crew members would go by before Lieutenant Eppright was identified.

"I just can't believe they searched this long and hard to find

those men," Ms. Pennington said.

An old stone marker was placed at the cemetery long ago to memorialize Lieutenant Eppright, but he now has a new headstone and grave by the rest of his family.

"When we were dating, David brought me out here to show me where his father was buried," Ms. Pennington said as she looked at her late husband's grave. "He so dearly loved his father and he wanted me to be a part of that - so we came here. When he was MIA, I put this stone here, and now we can have another stone."

Lieutenant Eppright's memorial service concluded with a 21-gun salute and flag folding by Army members from Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and a three ship F-15 flyover by members of Missouri Air National Guard's 131st Fighter Wing unit located near St. Louis, Mo.

"It was such a beautiful ceremony," Ms. Pennington said.

B-24 Liberator fast facts



Specifications

Span: 110 ft. 0 in.	of 8,000 lbs. of bombs
Length: 66 ft. 4 in.	Maximum speed: 303 mph.
Height: 17 ft. 11 in.	Cruising speed: 175 mph.
Weight: 56,000 lbs. loaded	Range: 2,850 miles
Armament: Eleven .50-cal. machine guns plus a normal maximum load	Service Ceiling: 28,000 ft.

INSIDE

Former USS Cole commander speaks about terrorist attack



Base members pay tribute to Lt. Whiteman



Honor Guard serves those who served



Wallyball tournament finale





Editorial Staff

Col. Greg Biscone

Maj. Joe DellaVedova

2nd Lt. Candace Cutrufo

Staff Sgt. Rob Hazelett

Airman 1st Class Jason Burton

Senior Airman Jason Barebo

509th Bomb Wing commander

Chief, Public Affairs

OIC, Internal Information

NCOIC Internal Information

Editor

Staff writer

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Air Force Quiz

How is the flag properly draped over the casket? (see answer below)

9er Line

Dial 687-3119 or e-mail 9r.Line@whiteman.af.mil

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Before calling the 9er Line, try to resolve your problem with the responsible base agency.

If you've exhausted all the normal avenues to resolve the situation, then call Col. Greg Biscone, 509th Bomb Wing commander, at 687-3119 or e-mail 9r.Line@whiteman.af.mil.

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Confidential crisis counseling available 24/7. Call the Whiteman Help Hotline: 866-395-4357

With the union at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased. Nothing should be placed on top of the flag when it's covering the casket, nor should the flag be lowered into the grave.

Air Force Quiz answer

Commander's Comments

By Col. Greg Biscone

509th Bomb Wing commander

Honoring our fallen heroes

On Memorial Day, we pause to honor our fallen heroes. It's a day unlike any other.

Since 1868, we have come together in our communities, towns and cities to place flowers and flags on the graves of those who have given their last full measure of devotion to our country.

Liberty is a precious gift whose benefits we all enjoy every day, but too often we give little thought to the price paid for it.

Memorial Day is the one day each year when we reflect on the tremendous sacrifices made by our fellow Americans. Today we pause to remember all of our fallen warriors who never came home to their families and friends.

America never forgets and constantly demonstrates its dedication to those who have given all they had for our sake.

On Tuesday, 1st Lt. David R. Epwright reached his final resting place in his family's plot at a cemetery in Warrensburg.

During World War II, Lieutenant Epwright was a navigator in a B-24 Liberator. He served along with a crew of eight other Army Air Forces Airmen and on the night of November 5, 1943, their bomber left Papua New Guinea on an armed reconnaissance mission.

During the flight, the crew radioed back that it had spotted a Japanese naval convoy. Its last orders were to simply track the ships and come back when fuel was low. But something happened — lost now to the ages — the B-24 crew sunk a Japanese cruiser and then was never heard from again.

But America never forgets and 63 years later, we laid Lieutenant Epwright to rest in

his home state of Missouri.

On Memorial Day, we pause and remember the generations of men and women who served in our Armed Forces — in times of peace and war — who have helped preserve the precious gift of liberty that we Americans enjoy every day.

Our base is named after one of those fallen heroes. It was on a Sunday morning — December 7, 1941 — when 2nd Lt. George A. Whiteman made the supreme sacrifice.

He died during a heroic attempt to take off in a P-40 pursuit plane and fight enemy aircraft staging a surprise attack against American naval and air bases in Hawaii.

For his valiant efforts, the young Pettis County, Mo., native was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, our nation's second highest award.

When I reflect on all those who have served in uniform and those who are proudly serving today, my thoughts center on one word: sacrifice.

For more than 230 years, America has had patriots who have left the comfort of their homes, left their loved ones to go into harm's way to protect and defend liberty. This is certainly true today.

Monday marks the 1,696th day we've been fighting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. To put that in perspective, World War II lasted 1,347 days. We've now been fighting the Global War on Terror for 10 1/2 months longer than World War II.

We are engaged and sacrificing across the globe. From taking the fight to the enemy in Iraq; to rebuilding lives in the wake of hurricane Katrina; to controlling satellites on the other side of the world; to fighting forest fires in the Rockies; to patrolling the skies over America — you can be proud of the work your Air Force is doing to protect our country.

I'm incredibly proud to be a member of an Air Force family that has more than 100,000 Airmen assigned or deployed in 64 countries, on every continent and in every time zone throughout the world.

Each time one of us puts on the uniform we are reminded of the heroes who wore the uniform before us. Our goal is to keep our nation as safe as our predecessors did and to be as proud of our accomplishments as we are of our past heroes.

Monday we honor all of our nation's heroes who gave their lives in the defense of this great nation.

As you celebrate this Memorial Day with family and friends, I urge you to take a moment to reflect on those who sacrificed their lives so we can enjoy a beautiful day like today.

This "moment of remembrance" is something each of us can do to keep their memory alive in our hearts. Surely we owe them nothing less than to remember, and to give thanks for all they have done on our behalf. On behalf of a grateful nation, we salute them, and pledge that we will never forget.

At the same time, I salute you for your constant vigil and courageous service as you sustain their proud legacy.

Enjoy a safe holiday and summer

Thanks for your focus and participation in safety day this week. As we internalize our 8th Air Force theme of responsibility "It's On You," remember the most important aspect, your great value to your family, friends, coworkers and our nation.

Please pay attention to your gut instincts when it comes to slowing down as you face new or unusual situations.

Enjoy yourselves but take the extra second to think ahead and stay safe.

Thanks.

OIF: It's not all bombs and bullets

By Lt. Col. Kevin Gulden

509th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander

When most Americans think about Operation Iraqi Freedom they think of Army convoys, Marines storming insurgent strongholds, and Air Force fighters dropping bombs.

But an essential part of the Operation Iraqi Freedom mission hasn't dropped one bomb or fired one bullet while confronting the enemy. The C-130 operations of the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing make immeasurable contributions to the mission every day by providing tactical theater airlift.

"Boots on the Ground" is the motto of the 386th AEW. "Get them in, support them, get them out." This has gone on every day, 24 hours a day, non-stop for the last three and half years. Flying approximately 70 missions a day from Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, the wing moved



228,000 military members into and out of the Iraqi theater in the last four months. Not to mention 11,000 tons of cargo. The wing's 24 C-130 aircraft make up 55 percent of the C-130s in theater, but carried more than 77 percent of the passenger airlift requirements. To clearly explain how busy this wing is, the 1600 plus sorties flown from Ali Al Salem in one month are more than many wings fly in an entire year.

A great deal of this success can be attributed to the young Airmen who maintain aircraft that were built long before they were born.

Many of the aircraft are even older than I am. The C-130s at Salem were built between 1961 and 1974. And their age shows.

Maintaining aircraft that are between 30-and 45-years-old brings a fair share of structural cracks and in-depth troubleshooting not addressed in the standard technical data. Routine calls to depot engi-

neers for repair guidance makes the expeditionary nature of this mission in this austere environment an even bigger challenge for the 386th Expeditionary Maintenance Group.

The 386th EMXG is made up of 381 maintainers that represent 25 different active-duty, guard and reserve bases.

The bulk of the maintainers, however, come from Pope, Dyess, Ramstein, Elmendorf, and Yokota Air Bases. Deployments to Ali Al Salem and other desert locations are routine for these warfighters.

The C-130 fleet does not fall into a standard AEF cycle. They are classified as "enablers." For some Air Force units, the "enablers" term means wait at home until you are needed.

But for the C-130 troops it means you are gone all the time. A majority of the troops that leave here in June, at the end of this rotation, know that they will be back here in 120 days.

Considering leave, time off

and catching up on all of the home station training requirements, you barely get your feet on the ground before it is time to deploy back to your second home.

But these maintainers, as well as the entire wing, do it with pride and enthusiasm, keeping the Air Force mission rolling.

For the 7,625 missions flown in the last 120 days, the 386th AEW has maintained a 95.4 percent mission effectiveness rate and finished out the month of April with an incredible 97.7 percent mission effectiveness rate.

Every Airman here knows that each successful mission is an effort toward convoy mitigation. Every sortie results in one less truck, or one less bus, traveling the roads of Iraq.

It's about keeping our brothers and sisters in arms out of harms way to the greatest extent possible.

"Get them in, support them, get them out." Get them home safely to their loved ones.

Newsline

Base exercise planned Tuesday

An exercise will be conducted here Tuesday. Local residents and base members may see and hear exercise activity during the day, which will include the use of the giant voice system and emergency personnel responding to exercise activities.

All force protection condition levels will be tested as well as the base barrier plan, staggered duty hour reporting plans, and surveillance detection and reporting procedures.

For more information, call public affairs at 687-6123.

Road repairs scheduled

In the Woodview neighborhood, several roads are scheduled for asphalt work.

These streets will be Titan Loop, Schilling Drive, Carswell Circle, March Drive, McConnell Lane and Westover Road between McConnell and March.

This project will mill and over lay the surface of the street and repair some curb and gutter. The work is scheduled to start June 5 and continue for approximately six weeks.

Due to the large equipment and the nature of the work, there will be no parking on the streets where the repairs are in progress from 6:30 a.m.-7 p.m. daily.

Please exercise caution in construction zones. Large equipment will be used to remove and haul off the existing materials from demolition and installation of new materials.

Please maintain control of children and pets during this time and reduce your vehicle speed to five mph in the construction area. These measures will ensure a safe working environment for both base members and construction workers.

For more information regarding these projects, contact Gary Hall, 509th Civil Engineer Squadron, at 687-6281.

Force shaping and GI Bill eligibility

Officers who acquired commissions using ROTC scholarships, Air Force Academy graduates, as well as those who originally declined the Montgomery GI Bill may enroll when involuntarily separated under force shaping. Those who voluntarily separate are not eligible.

To determine your eligibility or for more information, call base training and education services at 687-5750.

Cell phone reminder

Base members are reminded the 509th Security Forces Squadron is enforcing the new Department of Defense policy on restricting cell phone use while operating all vehicles on military installations and for government owned vehicles both on and off installations.

The 509th SFS will enforce this policy in two phases. The first phase will be a 60-day education period where offenders may be stopped for violating the new policy but will only receive a verbal warning, not a traffic citation.

Once the 60-day education period is complete, violators will be cited for a moving traffic violation much like speeding or running a stop sign.

Once traffic citations are issued, an offense will result in three traffic points being assessed against a driver's on-base driving record.

For more information about this new policy, contact the NCO in charge of police services, Tech. Sgt. Richard Coats, at 687-4254.

Kenney headquarters maximizes support to joint warfighters

By Capt. Aaron Wiley
Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs

HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE, Hawaii (AFPN)—The Gen. George C. Kenney Headquarters reaches its one-year anniversary Thursday.

Known as KHQ, the headquarters staff commands air, space and information operations for joint forces throughout the Asia-Pacific region, excluding Korea. Consisting of three elements — the Pacific Air Operations Center, the Pacific Air Force Forces staff and a support group—the KHQ staff plans and executes air operations ranging from humanitarian assistance to full-scale combat for the commanders of Pacific Air Forces and U.S. Pacific Command.

As the KHQ commander, Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula commands forces such as the fighter and bomber deployments that are part of the theater security plan and Air Force units participating in international exercises. He controls Air Force and other service air forces assigned to KHQ involved in missions including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. For contingencies and exercises, he takes on the roles of joint forces air component commander and joint task force commander.

"In a nutshell, our mission is to project peace, power and presence," General Deptula said.

"The Kenney Headquarters fills a previous void at the operational level of war and for humanitarian operations," General Deptula said. "While major commands such as PACAF focus on their mission to organize, train and equip, the Air Force's warfighting headquarters provide combatant commanders with a ready-

to-act command and control capability 24/7/365. Never again will we commence a no-notice contingency from a standing start."

The concept to turn several numbered air forces into warfighting headquarters was introduced in the summer of 2002 by then-Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper in response to the challenges of the 21st century and the war on terrorism.

The KHQ lineage is from 13th Air Force, but the majority of staff came from PACAF with some from 5th Air Force and 11th Air Force. It is currently a provisional unit that has been fully engaged since its creation. In Operation Unified Assistance, the Asian tsunami relief effort that began in December 2004, the Airmen who became the KHQ staff first tested the concept.

"Unified Assistance really brought home the importance of having one commander to command and control air operations in a contingency situation," said Col. Mark Tapper, the KHQ chief of staff, who commanded PACAF's 502nd Air Operations Group during the relief effort.

"By capitalizing on unity of effort and command we were able to quickly and effectively respond and provide relief to people who needed it immediately," Colonel Tapper said. "That kind of operation is the heart of Kenney Headquarters. It's about a unified effort that combines our joint and allied air forces to accomplish the combatant commander's objectives."

One of the primary roles of the KHQ is to provide plans to react, execute and succeed in more than 15 potential contingency situations. Designed for



Photo by Capt. Yvonne Levardi

Lt. Col. Curt Walker (left), Wing Commander Sumana Chulamokha, Group Capt. Suwit Wattanaroek (standing) and Group Capt. Noi Parkperm coordinate air operations at the Gen. George C. Kenney Headquarters during the 25th annual Cobra Gold exercise Tuesday. Colonel Walker is with the combat operations division at Kenney Headquarters and the three Thai officers are with the Royal Thai Air Force.

flexibility, the KHQ staff can assemble a team from local Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve assets or pull resources from other bases or major commands. KHQ also incorporates players from other U.S. military services and coalition forces into their operations as needed.

To remain effective, KHQ maintains an operational staff around the clock, eliminating reaction time to respond to crises.

As the military gets leaner, determining who will be selected as the functional air component commander will depend more on which service component has optimal command and control capabilities rather than the number of forces assigned.

Exercises give KHQ staff an opportunity to practice joint force plans and operations with all the services, plus

build valuable inroads for multinational coordination efforts. The KHQ staff interacts with countries throughout the region, demonstrating the Air Force's new capabilities while enhancing U.S. strategic relationships.

The Kenney Headquarters creation is one piece of the ongoing Air Force transformation that aims to optimize joint warfighting. It is one of the first examples of how consolidation and centralization of base operating support and policy functions will provide reach-back support and guidance more efficiently.

"Building on a proud warfighting heritage and a legacy of service, we are transforming into a more compact, lethal 21st century Air Force, built for agility, speed and precision," said Gen. T. Michael Moseley, Air Force chief of staff.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mikal Canfield

'Spreading smiles'

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam—Master Sgt. William Grant, 36th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, visits with Leona-lynsa Naich, a patient in the pediatric ward of Guam Memorial Hospital, and her mother, Mercy Naich, during a visit to the hospital Monday. Sergeant Grant and 20 other members of the 36th EAMXS and 393rd Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, visited the hospital to talk to children and their parents, read stories and hand out lithographs and pins. Airmen in the two units are deployed here with the B-2 aircraft from the 509th Bomb Wing.

'I knew we had been attacked'

Navy commander speaks to base members about USS Cole terrorist bombing

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Mary Olsen
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Through vivid description, the former captain of the USS Cole destroyer recounted a day that will forever remind Americans that we are never invincible to an unthinkable act of terrorism.

While speaking to base members at Mission's End May 18, Navy Cmdr. Kirk Lippold walked his audience through the day his ship was attacked by suicide bombers organized under Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist organization.

On Oct. 12, 2000, the USS Cole, in dire need of a refueling, pulled into one of two available ports: Aden, Yemen. Yemen had been a routine refueling stop for U.S. Navy ships.

"With our limited fuel, we only had two ports to choose from and the other one, Djibouti, was considered a higher threat," Commander Lippold said.

Before pulling into port, Commander Lippold went over his security checklist with the intentions of applying all 62 security measures, but once he saw where the ship would port and assessed the situation, he determined that not all applied.

The refueling began quickly and it appeared the crew would be able to set sail earlier than planned, but then the routine stop took a devastating turn.

"I heard a thunderous explosion," Commander Lippold said. "I felt 8,400 tons of destroyer rock violently from side to side."

A boat had pulled next to the Cole and detonated.

Lights went off, pictures fell to the floor, and tables and chairs were knocked over. Commander Lippold walked outside his cabin when he heard the explosion.

"I came out of my cabin and as I looked down the hallway, I could see the rolling smoke coming towards me," he said.

Commander Lippold's instinct told him this wasn't just a mechanical problem.

"To this day, I don't know why, but I knew we had been attacked," he said.

Not knowing if there would be another attack, Commander Lippold left his cabin and headed to the top of the ship to assess the extent of the damage.

"I took a deep breath and rolled out to the port side, not knowing what I would find," he said.

He leaned over the ship and saw the indentation where the blast occurred, and Commander Lippold still felt the boat rocking from the explosion. He immediately notified local Yemenise officials to freeze all harbor movement and to notify local hospitals that there would possibly be wounded sailors transported in. He also requested they send boats to come to the ship and take wounded off, but he iterated very specific rules due to the potential threat of another explosion.

"We were operating on peacetime rules of engagement when we pulled in that morning," Commander Lippold said. "Those rules of engagement were gone after the blast. The new rules were that if a boat came inside a 100-meter arch of the Cole, we'd get on a bullhorn once and warn them. If the boat didn't follow that rule, we'd fire one bullet in the air, and if it continued closing in, we'd open fire."

With these new rules of engagement, communication



Navy Cmdr. Kirk Lippold, commander of the USS Cole when it was attacked Oct. 12, 2000, speaks to Whiteman members about that day during a briefing at Mission's End May 18.

between crew members was critical. The message was relayed to all security personnel on the boat, but with instructions for them to be cautious so that fire wasn't opened on boats that were there to take wounded off.

Although Commander Lippold had not seen any wounded yet, he knew there would probably be injuries. He was right.

"Lying on the deck was something a commanding officer hopes he never has to come face to face with," he said. "One of my sailors was lying on the deck dead."

Commander Lippold continued assessing the situation when he encountered a distraught sailor.

"The chief engineer looked at me point blank and said, 'Sir, we're going to lose the ship.'"

But Commander Lippold had hope.

"When your back's against a wall, there's always a way out," he said.

Commander Lippold said his and the crew's source of inspiration came from the American flag, which would fly until all soldiers were accounted for.

"At the end of the first day, my executive officer asked me how I wanted to handle colors at the end of the day. I told him, 'that flag will fly until every single one of our ship-mates is recovered from the wreckage and headed home.'"

It would take eight days to recover the 17 sailors killed in the blast. On the ninth day, the crew held a memorial for the fallen sailors and the flag was taken down.

"That flag flew as a symbol that we were not going to let this terrorist attack deter us from our mission of defending freedom," Commander Lippold said.

Sailors would work day and night for the next two weeks to restore the ship, and on Oct. 29, 2000 they were safe and ready to sail home. As they headed out of the harbor, the crew cued up the first song over the sound system – "The Star-Spangled Banner." It would take 90 days after the USS Cole had first departed on a routine mission before it came back to Norfolk, Va.

Commander Lippold praised his sailors for their responsiveness the day of and after the attack, and said he was very proud of how they handled the situation.

"They were amazingly calm," he said. "They were quickly and effectively getting the job done without a sense of a panic."

Soon after he arrived home, Commander Lippold began contacting the families of the fallen sailors. For almost four weeks he, along with the command master chief, visited around the country with family members of those who died.

"I would spend two hours with each family," he said. "They asked hard questions and they were angry. They asked, 'Why were you there? Why didn't you refuel at sea? Why didn't you follow all the security measures like you had intended to?'"

But Commander Lippold said the questions weren't the hardest part.

"The next hour was a little bit tougher," he said. "That's when I would share the sailor's life with that family. I looked at wedding albums, photo albums and funeral programs. There wasn't a family I visited who didn't shed a tear."

Commander Lippold said he was able to get through the emotional aftermath of the attack because of his strong foundation.

"I had tremendous support from family, friends and faith," he said.

It's been more than five years since the USS Cole bombing and there is still some controversy surrounding the decisions made on the day of the attack.

"If you want accountability for what happened, there's only one man accountable - that's me," Commander Lippold said. "If you want to blame someone for what happened, there's only one man to blame - that's Osama bin Laden."

Despite uncertainty surrounding his promotion, Commander Lippold said he'll continue serving on active duty as long as he can.

"I'm still focused on serving our Navy and our nation and I'll continue to do so."

“

When your back's against a wall, there's always a way out.

—Navy Cmdr. Kirk Lippold—

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Rest, relax and reintegrate

Col. Connie Davis, 509th Mission Support Group commander, speaks to returning troops from Air Expeditionary Forces 7 and 8 at the deployment center Tuesday. The Airmen received briefings from legal, the chaplain and life skills. The main purpose of the briefing was to focus on the transition and activities of people returning from deployments, said Tech. Sgt. Mark Miller, 509th Medical Operations Squadron.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Hazelett

Slithering snakes on base

What you should know

(Editor's note: Whiteman's natural resource planner, Neil Bass, answers questions on the plants and animals of Whiteman Air Force Base and the surrounding area.)

Question: I have been seeing snakes around Skelton Lake. Are they poisonous?

Answer: I have been surveying snakes for six years and have not found a poisonous snake on base. Only two types of poisonous snakes

are known to occur in Johnson County, the copperhead and the timber rattlesnake.

Many people mistake water snakes for water moccasins, which do not occur in Johnson County.

Three types of water snakes can be found in Johnson County the most common being the northern water snake.

This is the snake seen around Skelton Lake, and other ponds or creeks around Whiteman.

These snakes have a diamond shaped head, are dark in color and

can grow quite large. They are territorial and can be aggressive. Northern water snakes are the only snakes I've found on base.

Having said that, the best advice is to treat all unidentified snakes as if they are poisonous and leave them alone.

Other questions on the plants and animals of Whiteman Air Force Base and the surrounding area can be addressed by contacting Neil Bass, Natural Resource Planner, at 660-687-2014 or at neil.bass@whiteman.af.mil.



Courtesy photo

Northern water snake



Photos by 1st Lt. Mary Olsen

Members from the Veterans of Foreign Wars post 2591 of Sedalia lower the American flag at the end of the George Whiteman Wreath Laying Ceremony at Memorial Park Cemetery in Sedalia Saturday. The Smith-Cotton Junior ROTC Honor Guard presented the colors and hanging of the flag, and the VFW lowered the flag and rendered a 21-gun salute after Lieutenant Whiteman's family members placed a wreath next to his grave. More than 100 people attended the ceremony.



ABOVE: Four T-38s from Whiteman Air Force Base perform a missing man flyover in honor of 2nd Lt. George Whiteman. The T-38s flew over the ceremony at the conclusion of Taps, played by Master Sgt. Bradley Case, 509th Munitions Squadron.



ABOVE: The Veterans of Foreign Wars post 2591 of Sedalia render a 21-gun salute at the conclusion of the George Whiteman Wreath Laying Ceremony Saturday. The ceremony, which took place at Memorial Park Cemetery in Sedalia, honored 2nd Lt. George Whiteman, a Sedalia native and the first American air casualty of World War II. Lieutenant Whiteman's P-40 fighter, the "Lucky Me," was shot down as he took off during the attack on Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941.

LEFT: Col. Greg Biscone, 509th Bomb Wing commander, receives the folded American flag from a VFW post 2591 member after it was retired by VFW members. Colonel Biscone was the guest speaker at the George Whiteman Wreath Laying Ceremony Saturday.



Members from the 509th Security Forces Squadron render a salute as the flag is presented. About 30 SFS members attended the George Whiteman Wreath Laying ceremony Saturday.

Commission maintains U.S. military cemeteries overseas

By Steven Donald Smith
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—Recognizing the need for a federal agency to take the lead in honoring U.S. servicemembers who died on foreign soil, Congress enacted legislation in 1923 to create the American Battle Monuments Commission.

“The American Battle Monuments Commission maintains and oversees American cemeteries and monuments around the world. They are commemorative sites honoring our nation's war heroes,” said retired Army Brig. Gen. John “Jack” Nicholson, secretary and chief executive officer of the commission.

The commission directs the administration and operation of 24 American military cemeteries and 25 monuments and memorials located in 15 countries, including three memorials in the United States. The commission is an agency of the executive branch of the federal government.

The commission maintains the sites with appropriated funds, General Nicholson said, and employs about 300 foreign nationals.

“We sort of live by the motto of our first chairman, Gen. John J. Pershing, who said, ‘Time will not dim the glory of their deeds,’” said Charles A. Krohn, deputy chief of public affairs.

Its mission also includes designing and constructing new cemeteries and monuments. For instance, the commission designed, planned and raised money for the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., which was turned over to the National Park Service after it opened on April 29, 2004.

The primary focus of the commission is World War I and World War II, but it also maintains a cemetery in Mexico City from

the Mexican-American War (1846-48) and a cemetery in Panama that includes U.S. troops and civilians who died of yellow fever while building the Panama Canal, Mr. Krohn said.

There are 124,917 American war dead interred in ABMC cemeteries: 30,921 from World War I, 93,246 from World War II and 750 from the Mexican-American War, commission officials said.

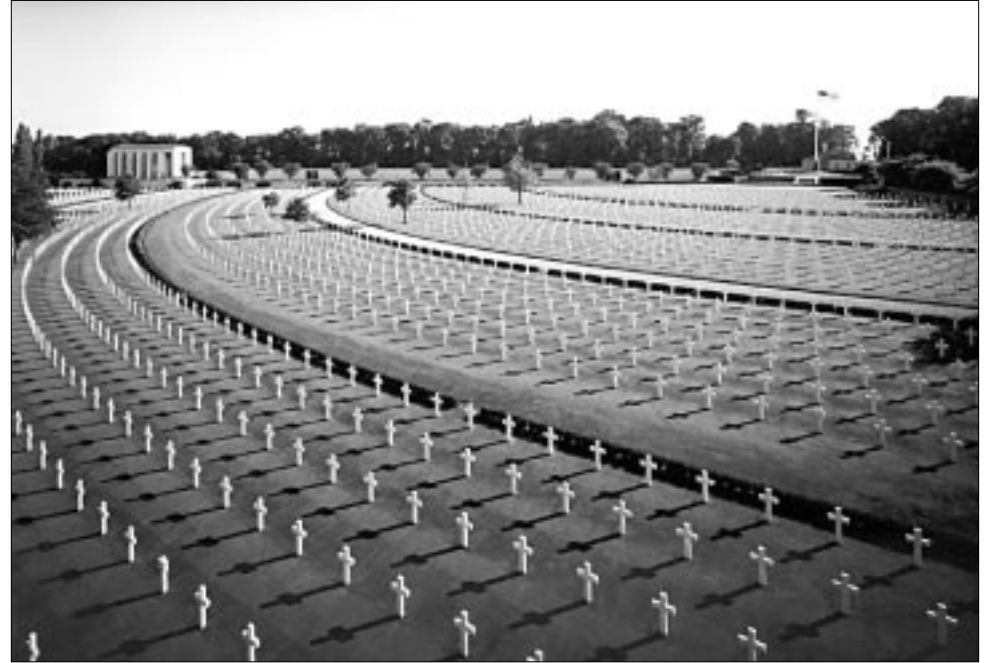
The families of those killed during World War I and World War II had the option of bringing the bodies of their loved ones back to the United States for burial. But 39 percent allowed the remains to be buried overseas at American cemeteries. In 1949, the next of kin again had the option of repatriating the remains or leaving them overseas. Sixty-five percent opted to move the remains back to the U.S., Mr. Krohn said.

The American cemetery in Normandy, France, is the commission's most famous and most-visited site, General Nicholson said. He said the Normandy cemetery, along with all the other sites, are a reminder to all people of what the U.S. has done for the cause of freedom.

“The United States has willingly sent its young men and women to these foreign countries when asked to restore their freedom,” General Nicholson said. “We encourage people to visit them to be reminded of the sacrifice and courage of the Americans buried there.”

Mr. Krohn said that on a visit to a commission cemetery in Tunisia in February, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld became a legend with the folks who work at the commission.

“As he was being escorted through he saw a cigarette butt on the ground and, without saying anything, he bent down,



Courtesy photo

The U.S. cemetery in Cambridge, England, contains the remains of 3,812 American war dead from World War II. It is one of 24 American cemeteries overseas administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission

picked up the cigarette butt and put it in his pocket,” Mr. Krohn said. “He may not have made much of it, but it was watched by a lot of people who were exceptionally moved by the thoughtfulness of that act.”

The biggest challenge faced by the commission is getting people to visit some of its more obscure cemeteries and monuments, Mr. Krohn said.

“We have cemeteries near Paris and Rome, but nobody knows about them. Spreading the word is our biggest challenge,” he said.

General Nicholson said visiting the sites is an educational experience, and everyone he has talked to has been glad he or she made the trip.

“I think there has never been an American or a person from any other country that has visited one of our cemeteries or memorials that regretted it,” General Nicholson said. “Go see them. You’ll be glad you did.”

A full list of American Battle Monuments Commission cemeteries and memorials is available on the commission’s Web site, www.abmc.gov.

Commissaries want to remind customers to be prepared

**By Capt. Audricia McKinney and
Bonnie Powell**

Defense Commissary Agency

FORT LEE, Va. – With memories still lingering from Hurricane Katrina, the need to prepare for a disaster is on everyone's mind.

Government agencies and the Red Cross recommend Americans keep a supply of essentials on hand above and beyond what they normally have on their kitchen shelves.

Military families are being encouraged to "load up their pantries" as the Defense Commissary Agency launches an awareness campaign encouraging military families to keep nonperishable foods, water and other necessities on hand for emergencies.

DeCA is teaming up with the Armed

Forces Emergency Services Branch of the American Red Cross to raise awareness of disaster preparedness throughout the military community.

The "What's in Your Closet" campaign kicks off in June and is intended to get military families thinking about how prepared they are for a disaster.

Customers will see posters and handouts in stores, and reminder buttons on employees. "The storm season starts June 1 and it's a fact that commissaries and military families have been affected by hurricanes and typhoons at home and abroad," said Patrick Nixon, chief executive officer and acting director of the Defense Commissary Agency.

"We want to raise awareness of the need to keep emergency supplies on hand – and that shoppers can realize savings of 30 percent or more by using their commis-

sary benefit to supply their emergency closet," he added.

The media has also heightened awareness of the possibility of a "pandemic," an outbreak of infectious disease that has the potential to spread worldwide.

"Disasters can take on many forms," said Joseph Moffat, executive director, Armed Forces Emergency Services. "From blackouts to blizzards, to tornadoes and earthquakes, everyone should be prepared with enough emergency supplies to last seven days."

"The commissary disaster preparedness posters have a list of basic items people might want to consider," said Nixon. "But there may be many more items such as shelf-stable milk or favorite snacks that people might want to include. This is simply intended to get people thinking and get them to take action – now."

Red Cross representatives will have the opportunity to set up displays or tables in commissaries to provide information and answer questions about disaster preparedness.

The type of information and events offered will vary according to location, and in some cases customers will also have the opportunity to sign up for volunteer services and classes, such as first aid or disaster preparedness.

Other government agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are working closely with local communities and relief organizations to remind residents to make emergency preparations.

For more information on disaster preparedness: www.fema.gov; www.dhs.gov; www.redcross.org.

Team Whiteman Community

Vacation Bible School

The base chapel is getting ready to trek on an Arctic Adventure, which is the theme to this year's vacation Bible school June 5 - 9.

Each day, from 1:30 - 4:30 p.m., there will be bus service provided through base housing as children, ages 4 years-old through sixth grade, take an Arctic Adventure to learn more about God. Registration forms for kids and volunteers can be e-mailed or picked up at the chapel.

T-shirts with iron transfers will be available for \$5, and all monies should be turned in to the chapel before June 1.

For more information, call Larri Smith at 687-3652 or e-mail larri.smith@whiteman.af.mil.

Rock climbing

Test your rock climbing skills at the Outdoor Recreation Center, hosted by the

Enlisted Spouses' Club, from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. June 13.

Contact Tabitha Pleasants for details, tabithapleasants@hotmail.com or call 563-4145, or visit www.whitemanesc.com.

Bunco

Ready to roll those dice with the Enlisted Spouses' Club? The fun begins at 7 p.m. on June 9 at Mission's End with food and plenty of fun.

Contact Tabitha Pleasants at tabithapleasants@hotmail.com or call 563-4145, or visit www.whitemanesc.com.

Education

Call the base education center at 687-5750 for more details on these events.

PME course clarification

The senior noncommissioned officer professional military education course 14 was launched in March.

This course does not replace course 12, nor is it an additional level of enlisted pro-

fessional military education. The only difference is course 14 is a web-based course.

Registration in course 14 depends solely on current and future Internet availability. Students are not permitted to switch between courses.

Tests are electronically administered through the education center for both tests. For more information, contact the base training and education office at 687-5750.

ACT testing set

The base Education and Training Flight will offer the American College Testing assessment June 16 at 7:30 a.m.

To sign up, e-mail the test examiner at ron.johnson@whiteman.af.mil.

Family Support

Call 687-7132 for more details on these family support center activities.

WIC representative visits base

A WIC representative is available beginning at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday and

Thursday. WIC includes nutrition education, health promotion and a supplemental food program to help women, infants and children who have nutritional needs.

For more details, call the WIC office in Warrensburg at 747-2012.

Pre-deployment briefing set

A mandatory pre-deployment briefing for people who are deploying or going on a temporary duty assignment for more than 30 days begins at 1 p.m. Wednesday. Spouses are encouraged to attend.

This briefing covers information about preparing for deployment and programs available to family members who are left behind.

Special evening seminar teaches spouses about military

Heart Link begins at 5 p.m. Thursday. Learn about the mission, customs, protocol and support resources and services available from the experts.

Dinner and child monitoring provided on-site. Reservation required.

Remembrance

By Capt. Tony Wickman

71st Flying Training Wing Public Affairs

Across

1. Eastern European
5. Chart
8. Breakfast and lunch
13. A reef, sandbar, or shoal
14. Fury
15. Shrek and others
16. Chinese menu item
17. Hallow grounds for military members
19. Arabian Peninsula sultanate
20. Mil. recognition, perhaps
21. Mil. member honored by Memorial Day/Military Appreciation Month
25. Terminate
26. Computer laugh
29. Tokyo, once
30. Celebrate
32. Astronomy sight
33. Looney Tunes Le Pew
34. Made firmer or stronger
35. Military mantra for comrades in arms
41. Perceived by the ear
42. Possible result of hearing

T	E	A	S	J	A	B	A	E	R
O	R	B	P	A	C	T	A	L	L
N	A	S	A	U	T	O	S	E	A
C	U	N	N	I	N	G	H	A	M
I	D	O	L	T	O	G	A	D	E
R	A	N	T	N	A	S	H	A	D
A	N	D	R	E	W	S	H	I	D
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A	R	T	B	O	C	A	P	I	L
B	E	A	L	E	D	A	R	E	D
B	A	M	B	O	O	L	I	R	A
U	N	D	O	N	E	S	N	I	T
S	T	A	R	E	E	E	R	A	Y

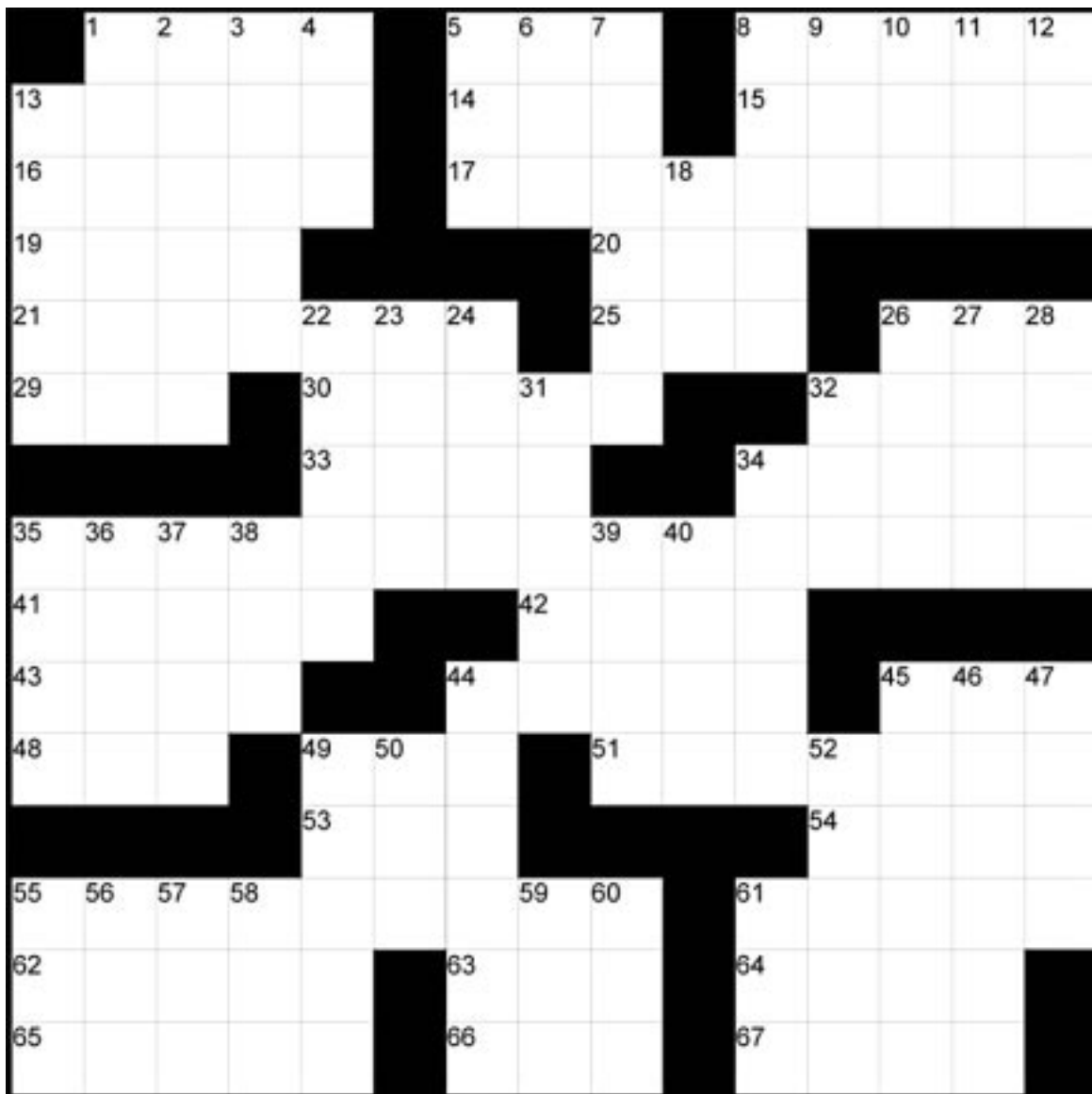
May 19 answers

"Taps"

43. Walk
44. Last Air Force CJCS
45. Mao __-tung
48. Donkey
49. Resinous secretion for shellac
51. Off the __; crazy
53. Drug purchase without a prescription, in short
54. The Great __; biopic about WWII rescue mission
55. Wild animals exhibition
61. Memorial Day remembrance item; subject of 44 DOWN
62. Susan's role on All My Children
63. Actress Penelope __ Miller
64. Woodwind instrument
65. King of the Hill town
66. Get by with great effort
67. Dampens

Down

1. Disgraced
2. Unending
3. Isolated
4. National org. for 21 ACROSS
5. Mil. member honored by Memorial Day/Military Appreciation Month
6. Airport abbrev.
7. Buckshot
8. A monovalent element
9. __ on; urge
10. Skill attained by study, practice, or observation
11. Zodiac sign
12. Mil. identification
13. Push
18. Charged particle
22. Drive back
23. Figure skating jump
24. Scruff
26. Actress Anderson
27. Baking need
28. Shane actor Alan



31. CW singer Frizzell
32. Classical Japanese drama
34. Succinct
35. Space org.
36. Six per inning
37. Minerals
38. Quick rest
39. First name of current CSAF
40. Au naturel

44. Author of In Flanders Fields
45. __ Dome; 1921 scandal involving US Navy oil reserve
46. Grouses
47. Maelstrom
49. General who first proclaimed Memorial Day
50. Dined
52. Investigation

55. __ culpa
56. Mistake
57. Zero
58. Pilot with 5+ kills
59. Toner product
60. 67°30 east of due north
61. Mil. member honored by Memorial Day/Military Appreciation Month



Going the distance

By Staff Sgt. Rob Hazelett

509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Three runners from Whiteman were among 237 participants who finished the Olathe Marathon, held in Olathe, Kan., Saturday.

In his quest to qualify for the Boston Marathon, Maj. Bart Oaks, Wing Plans deputy commander, was the top finisher from Whiteman with a time of 3 hours, 44 minutes, 11 seconds. He remains 24 minutes shy from reaching his goal, having run six marathons in the past 18 months.

Maj. Todd Berge, Detachment 5 commander and B-2 instructor pilot, completed the race in 3:45:44. This was Major Berge's second marathon, the other being the Air Force marathon in 2004.

In her first marathon, Capt. Jocelyn Southerland, 509th Mission Support Squadron military personnel flight commander, crossed the 26.2-mile finish line at 4:24:21. Doing a marathon was one of her goals, and she said she finished feeling better than she

ever expected.

Whiteman also had a relay-marathon group that placed 14th out of 23 teams.

Dividing the treacherous run into five parts, Senior Master Sgt. Dan Sherwood, 509th MSS, Master Sgt. Brad Plante, 509th MSS first sergeant, Debby Lemire, Capt. Kathleen O'Neill, 509th MSS, and Maureen O'Neill finished the more than 26-mile distance in 3:58:34.

Although training plays a vital role in preparing for a marathon, there are other factors that come into play on race day, Major Oaks said.

"There are many variables in running a marathon, so one is never sure what to expect," said Major Oaks, who ran in last year's Olathe marathon but was hampered this year due to a cold. "It still felt good to finish the marathon, and I even ran 10 minutes faster than I did last year."

From first-timers to marathon veterans, the reasons are different for running. However, their objectives remain the same: finish the race.

Down to the wally-wire



Photos by Staff Sgt. Rob Hazelett

ABOVE: Nicholas Wzientek hits the ball to Eric McFarland, both from 72nd Test and Evaluation Squadron, during the Walleyball tournament championship against Detachment 6, 372nd Training Squadron May 17. The 72nd TES won the tournament, which features a volleyball game played by two four-person teams on a racquetball court.

LEFT: James Trudell, Det. 6, 372nd TRS, hits the ball away from Eric McFarland, 72nd TES, during the Walleyball tournament championship game. The tournament had seven teams, and was decided in three games by a 15 - 14 score.